

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 DODE-00 AID-10 IO-03 DPW-01

PRS-01 USIA-04 L-02 RSR-01 /074 W

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R 241105Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6397

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 15354

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PING, MILI, VS

SUBJECT: MR 2 SITREP, AUGUST 24

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL NHA TRANG AUG 24, 1973

REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L NHA TRANG 0793

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR 2 SITREP, AUGUST 24

1. SECURITY SITUATION: MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MR 2 OVER THE PAST 48 HOURS REMAINED AT A HIGH LEVEL. THIRTY-EIGHT INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED: THEY WERE CONCENTRATED IN BINH DINH (13), PHU YEN (12) AND KONTUM (11). MOST OF THEM WERE CARRIED AS ENEMY ATTACKS BY FIRE, THOUGH THERE WERE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF MINING INCIDENTS, INCLUDING ONE ON THE RAILROAD IN PHU YEN. CASUALTIES DECREASED MARKEDLY ON THE ENEMY SIDE, AND REMAINED ABOUT THE SAME FOR THE RVNAF: VC/NVA: 30 KIA, ONE CAPTURED; RVNAF: 24 KIA, 53 WIA. RVNAF CAPTURED EIGHT INDIVIDUAL AND

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THREE CREW-SERVED ENEMY WEAPONS AND REPORTEDLY TWO INDIVIDUAL

WEAPONS LOST. AIR STRIKES REMAINED HEAVY, WITH 33 ON AUGUST 22 AND 36 ON AUGUST 23. ALL BUT TWO WERE IN BINH DINH.

2. THE CONSUL AT KONTUM REPORTS THAT GENERAL CAM, COMMANDER OF THE 23RD DIVISION, HAS INITIATED A NEW STRATEGY TO RETAKE TRUNG NGHIA AND POLEI KRONG. REALIZING THAT CONTINUED FRONTAL ASSAULTS ON TRUNG NGHIA ARE BLEEDING HIS TROOPS WITHOUT MAKING MUCH GAIN AGAINST THE WELL-ENTRENCHED ENEMY, HE NOW PLANS TO SUPPLEMENT THE FRIENDLY TOE-HOLD IN THE FRONT LINE TRENCHES EAST OF TRUNG NGHIA (WHICH WERE RETAKEN EARLIER THIS MONTH) BY ATTACKS ON THE TOWN FROM THE NORTH AND SOUTH. TO THIS END, THE 44TH REGT HAS ALREADY FOUGHT PAST THE K63 BATTALION OF THE ENEMY 95B REGT AND GAINED A POSITION ON THE RIVER BANK AT NGO THANH, ACROSS THE DAK BLA FROM TRUNG NGHIA. THEY HAVE YET TO TAKE THE LAST ENEMY STRONGPOINT AT PLEI DJO DRAP, ONE KILOMETER WEST OF NGO THANH, WHICH WOULD GIVE THEM CONTROL OF THE BANK OPPOSITE TRUNG NGHIA AND A POSITION FROM WHICH TO SHELL OR ATTACK TRUNG NGHIA. MEANWHILE, THE 45TH REGT, FRONTING TRUNG NGHIA ON THE EAST, IS SENDING SAPPER SQUADS AGAINST ENEMY POSITIONS IN THE HILLS WHICH DOMINATE THE TOWN FROM THE NORTH. THESE HAVE STILLED MUCH OF THE ARTILLERY FIRE WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY BROKEN THE 45TH'S FRONTAL ASSAULTS ON THE TOWN. GVN TROOPS WILL NOW ATTEMPT TO MOVE FURTHER WEST TO THE NORTH OF TRUNG NGHIA AND ENCIRCLE THE TOWN.

3. CASUALTY REPORTING ON AUG 21 ATTACK BY ELEMENTS OF THE 95B REGT ON THE 2ND RANGER GROUP (REPORTED NHA TRANG 0785) IS A FURTHER ILLUSTRATION OF THE CAPRICIOUSNESS OF RVNAF STATISTICS. THE CONSUL IN KONTUM REPORTS THAT THE 23RD DIVISION MORNING BRIEFING ON AUG 22 REPORTED 17 RANGERS KIA, 33 WIA AND 92 ENEMY KIA. THE II CORPS CHIEF OF STAFF SAID THE SAME MORNING THAT 89 ENEMY HAD BEEN KILLED AND THAT THIS FIGURE WAS BASED ON BODY COUNT. LATER THAT DAY, THE RANGER'S OWN BRIEFING CLAIMED 49 ENEMY WERE KILLED. WE UNDERSTAND THE FIGURES OF 17 FRIENDLY AND 89 ENEMY KIA RECEIVED INTERNATIONAL PRESS DISSEMINATION.

4. COL LE HUU DUC (ACTING DEPUTY MR 2 COMMANDER) RECENTLY MENTIONED THAT COL NGUYEN VIET DAM, COMMANDER OF THE REGION'S RF/PF, WILL RETIRE ON SEPT 15, 1973, AND BE REPLACED BY COL VY VAN BINH.

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DUC CLEARLY FEELS DAM HAS BEEN AN INDIFFERENT LEADER. BINH, RELEASED THIS SPRING BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, MAY BE AN IMPROVEMENT, BUT WE UNDERSTAND HE ASKED GEN TOAN, MR 2 COMMANDER, TO GIVE HIM THE JOB AS A NON-COM AT ASSIGNMENT SO THAT HE COULD RECUPERATE.

5. DUC ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN YESTERDAY THAT THE CONCENTRATION OF ENEMY ACTIVITY IN THE FOUR NORTHERN PROVINCES OF MR 2 HAD RESULTED IN RELAXED MILITARY VIGILANCE IN OTHER AREAS OF THE

REGION. HE MENTIONED THE PHAN RANG AIRBASE, THE CAM RANH HARBOR AND AMMUNITION DUMP, AND THE HILLS COMMANDING NHA TRANG AS ATTRACTIVE TARGETS WHICH THE ENEMY MIGHT STRIKE AND FIND POORLY DEFENDED. COLHEINH (CURRENTLY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR VITAL INSTALLATIONS) WAS ORDERED TO INSPECT THESE AREAS AT ONCE AND TAKE THE NECESSARY MEASURES FOR THEIR PROPER DEFENSE.

COOK
UNQUOTE:
MARTIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON15354
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS MARTIN
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730817/aaaaamac.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06-Dec-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <28-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MR 2 SITREP, AUGUST 24 FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL NHA TRANG AUG 24, 1973
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, VS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005